A Policy to Promote Recreation for People with a Disability

Nova Scotia
Sport and Recreation Commission

RECEIVED
APR 7 1992
N. S. LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

Recreation for People with a Disability

THE VALUE OF LEISURE

The value of leisure experience in enhancing the quality of life for people with a disability should not be underestimated.

Recreation offers most people with a disability the same fun and challenge it does all participants. For some people, the recreation environment is a safe, non-threatening setting in which to experience decision making, risk taking, and community involvement. It can also provide an ideal opportunity for people with a disability to develop basic social and motor skills. For someone who has been institutionalized, the chance to independently choose activities in which to become involved, or even to decide whether or not to participate, can be a significant learning experience.

The rate of unemployment is very high among individuals with disabilities. Satisfying leisure experiences can contribute to a sense of self-worth, contribution, and belonging to the community that may otherwise be missing.

A Policy to Promote Recreation for People with a Disability

In 1989 the Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia (RCDNS) met with the Minister Responsible for the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission (SRC) and encouraged the Commission to develop a policy on recreation and sport for people with disabilities.

A Committee was appointed to manage the task. The Committee involved:

Susan Tirone (Chair)	RCDNS
John Yauss	RCDNS
Charlie MacDonald	RCDNS
John Rogers	RCDNS
Dick Hayden	SRC
Mike Arthur	SRC
Al Wilson	SRC
Bill Mackie	SRC

The policy development process included an assessment of Sport and Recreation Commission programs, questionnaires to municipalities and provincial sport and recreation organizations, interviews with key agencies and a review of policies and programs of other provincial governments.

Disability in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia has the highest incidence of disability of any province in Canada. The 1986 Health and Activity Limitation (HAL) Survey conducted by Statistics Canada reveals that 16.9% or 145,725 Nova Scotians have some type of mobility, sensory or mental disability. The national average is 13.2%.

There are a number of reasons for this high number which are related to the incidence of particular types of disability. It is important to note that there are educational centers located within the province operated by the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority.

DISABILITY DEFINED

Mobility: Limited in ability to walk, move from room to room, carry an object for 10 meters, or stand for long periods.

Agility: Limited in ability to bend, dress or undress oneself, get in and out of bed, cut toenails, use fingers to grasp or handle objects, reach, or cut own food.

Seeing: Limited in ability to read ordinary newsprint or to see someone from 4 meters, even when wearing glasses.

Hearing: Limited in ability to hear what is being said in conversation with one other person or two or more persons, even when wearing a hearing aid.

Speaking: Limited in ability to speak and be understood.

Other: Limited because of learning disability or emotional or psychiatric disability, or because of developmental delay.

Unknown: Limited but nature not specified.

92-04405/

DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to review and develop recreation policies to address the needs of people with disabilities it is important to understand the demographic breakdown of this segment of the Nova Scotia population.

As has already been stated there are more than 145,000 Nova Scotians with a disability. By **Age** this number breaks down as follows:

Fig.1 **Disabilities per Age Group**

0-14 years	11,685
15-24 years	7,575
25-34 years	13,450
35-44 years	15,960
45-54 years	17,175
55-64 years	28,000
65-74 years	28,445
75-84 years	16,680
85 years & over	6,755
TOTAL	145,725

The incidence of disability for children in Nova Scotia is the second highest in Canada at 6.3% Only Manitoba has a higher number. Currently 35.6% of the total disabled population in this province is 65 years or over.

Nova Scotia has the highest incidence of disability in Canada of the 35-65 year age group; 41.9% of the disabled population in Nova Scotia fall within this range. As this group ages, the 65 and over category will be significantly affected.

Each person with a disability is different. Individuals report single and multiple disabilities ranging from mild to moderate and severe.

By age, the **Severity of Disability** breaks down as follows:

Fig.2 **Severity of Disability per Age Group***

	0-14 Years	15-64 Years	65 Years & Over
Mild	9,158	42,435	17,010
Moderate	1,780	26,270	17,975
Severe	575	12,045	12,440
TOTAL	11,513	80,750	47,425

The following is a breakdown by **Category of Disability** for adults in Nova Scotia. It is important to note that people could report more than one disability.

Fig.3 **Category of Disibility**

Mobility	88,490
Agility	77,235
Seeing	21,120
Hearing	43,125
Speaking	8,720
Other	26,330
Nature Unknown	8,575

A total of 52,735 Nova Scotian adults report having a single disability. More than 81,000 Nova Scotian adults report multiple disabilities ranging from mild to moderate to severe.

Fig.4 **Single/Multiple Disabilities***

Two types of disabilities	44,265
Three types of disabilities	21,985
Four types of disabilities	9,940
Five types of disabilities	4,030
Six types of disabilities	1,080

* It is important to note that these figures refer to disabled individuals residing in households and do not include those living in institutions.

RESIDENCE

In Nova Scotia 139,675 individuals reside in households and 6,050 people reside in institutions. Seventy three percent of those in institutions are over the age of 65.

RECREATION

While some strides have been made toward integrating people with disabilities into community recreation activities, particularly in urban areas, there are still improvements to be made. The HAL Survey indicates that for those people 15 years and over, 34,915 people would like to have more activity in their lifestyles. Much of their time is spent watching television and talking on the telephone. 64,895 individuals 15 years and over never participate in physical activity.

TRAVEL

In terms of ability to travel to activities, 67,110 report that there is no public transport available and 8,625 have trouble using public transportation.

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

The HAL Survey reflects that 95,355 people age 15 and over, who are representative of the labour force, have an income less than $15,000 a year. The poverty line for a single individual in Halifax is approximately $12,000 a year. A total of 16,000 individuals with a disability are on family benefits.

Of the 80,750 Nova Scotians with a disability in the age group 15-64 only 31,655 are employed; 42,755 are out of the labour force and 5,425 are unemployed.

RCDNS works toward the improvement of recreation and leisure activities by providing many services:

- An Information Resource Centre for public use responds to hundreds of requests for information yearly.
- A quarterly newsletter "Integrare" keeps members informed about issues and themes pertaining to recreation and people who have a disability. Another newsletter "RAP" is published for recreation practitioners working in special care homes. It offers ideas regarding activity planning for older adults and gives news on workshops/seminars. "Directions", a reference series, published periodically, includes definitions, articles and implications surrounding issues such as attitudes, access, future trends and citizen advocacy.
- Research is conducted to evaluate services for people who have a disability. Results are presented to the organizations and individuals providing the service.
- Special reports are prepared to address specific recreation needs of people who have a disability and the services required to meet those needs.
- Workshops and training opportunities are offered on current topics such as evaluation, advocacy, lifestyle management and recreation for all. The "Recreation for All" leadership workshop has been designed to orient groups and individuals to the recreation needs of people who have a disability. Participants learn how recreation can be made available to all people regardless of physical, mental or emotional impairment. RCDNS has developed an Instructor Resource Listing and coordinates requests for workshops from community groups and municipal recreation directors.
- RCDNS maintains contact with groups across Canada whose goals are similar. RCDNS is a member of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.
- An annual conference, open to members and non-members who are interested in recreation and disability, takes place each fall. Program sessions focus on current topics and trends.
- The Rick Hansen Award is presented to an individual or organization in Nova Scotia who has made a significant contribution to the development of recreational opportunities for people who have a disability. The Facility Excellence Award is presented for excellence in design and modification of facilities and environments that provide ease of access and use for everyone. Any community, organization, business or municipality in Nova Scotia is eligible.
- The RCDNS Library contains over 1,000 books, reports, articles and journals, on subjects related to recreation and disability. There are currently 20 videos in the library and several manuals/reports relating to accessibility, recreation inclusion and sport for all.

The Council has a 17 member Board of Directors with representation from throughout the province. There are eight regional representatives who act as regional contacts for RCDNS and communicate with the members and general public regarding public education and other issues relating to recreation and people with a disability. Regional representatives are situated in:

Lunenburg/Queens

Annapolis/Kings/West Hants

Yarmouth/Digby/Shelburne

Halifax County

Colchester/Cumberland/East Hants

Antigonish/Pictou/Guysborough

Cape Breton

Richmond/Inverness

RCDNS is funded by the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission. The Commission's Coordinator of Municipal and Special Recreation Services is an ex-officio Board Member.

RCDNS can communicate effectively with hearing and speech impaired individuals with a visual ear. A liaison service is also provided between hearing and speech impaired individuals and their local recreation department.

The services of RCDNS are used by many individuals and groups such as people with disabilities, parents, professionals, educators, students, advocate associations, community organizations and the general public. Membership in the Council is open to all interested.

Sport for People with a Disability

Some sport groups involve one specific disability in a variety of sports, while others offer one sport to people with different disabilities. All of these groups are interested in including new participants in their sport programs.

For current addresses and phone numbers of the following organizations, contact the Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia at 423-6482.

- Special Olympics
- Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, Nova Scotia Branch
- Blind Sports Nova Scotia
- Canadian Amputee Sport Association - Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Deaf Sports Association
- Canadian Association of Disabled Skiing - Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Riding for the Disabled Association
- Red Cross Adaptive Aquatics
- Cerebral Palsy Sports

For further information on sport for people with a disability contact:

Sport Nova Scotia
5516 Spring Garden Road
Post Office Box 3010 South
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3G6

Phone: 425-5450

Roles Within The Delivery System

The Sport and Recreation Commission will identify and communicate the roles of the partners within the sport and recreation delivery system in meeting the needs of people who have a disability. The Sport and Recreation Commission recognizes the Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia (RCDNS) as an important partner in providing resources in leadership development, consultation, research and communication. The Commission also recognizes that effective partnerships with many provincial, municipal and community based organizations will result in a realization of the ultimate goal of full participation.

Transportation

The Sport and Recreation Commission will encourage sport and recreation program providers to consider transportation needs of disabled persons when planning programs and services.

The Sport and Recreation Commission will promote the need for transportation for people with a disability to provincial government departments and agencies.

Transportation for people with disabilities will be an eligible cost under Sport and Recreation Commission financial assistance programs.

Social Support

The Sport and Recreation Commission will initiate discussions with the Department of Community Services to promote recreation as an essential aspect of their clients' daily lives.

The Sport and Recreation Commission will cooperate with other government departments and agencies to promote sport and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Sport and Recreation Commission will encourage municipal recreation departments to cooperate with community service agencies in meeting the sport and recreation needs of people with disabilities.

Funding

The Sport and Recreation Commission will use existing financial assistance programs as a method of helping provincial, municipal, sport, recreation and community groups to develop programs and services for people with disabilities.

The development of recreation services that will increase the participation of people with disabilities will be considered a priority when reviewing applications for financial assistance.

Awareness Of Recreation Opportunities

The Sport and Recreation Commission will promote and support initiatives to encourage people with a disability to participate in community sport and recreation opportunities.

Recreation for People with a Disability

Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia (R.C.D.N.S.)
5516 Spring Garden Road, Suite 308
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3G6

Phone: 423-6482

Since 1976, the Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia (RCDNS) has operated as an information and advocacy body for the recreation needs of people with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

The Council has established three main goals:

- To promote and encourage the development of leisure opportunities for people with a disability.
- To educate the community at large to the recreation and leisure needs of people with disabilities.
- To increase participation of people with disabilities in recreation and leisure opportunities.

The primary objectives of the Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia are:

- To encourage the involvement of people with disabilities in the planning and provision of recreation opportunities of their choice.
- To facilitate cooperation and coordination among community recreation agencies and interest groups within communities.
- To encourage the provision of a range of community opportunities responding to abilities, desires, and needs of people with a disability.
- To create an awareness of Barrier Free Design and modification regarding accessibility.
- To facilitate leadership training, focusing on physical and social integration of people with disabilities in recreation.
- To provide information and resources on current trends, programs and facility designs.
- To facilitate networking and cooperation with provincial agencies and associations.
- To recognize outstanding contributions in improving recreation for people with a disability.
- To provide support and advocacy on a variety of issues to ensure the recognition of recreation as a legitimate priority.
- To work with local community groups to assess needs and strengths and develop strategies to overcome barriers in community programs.
- To facilitate and provide resource personnel to conduct workshops and presentations to professionals, students and community groups to assist public education, awareness and recreation inclusion.
- To provide consultation and technical assistance, including guidelines, on how to make recreation accessible in the community through programs, building accessibility requirements and funding.
- Briefs to government advocating changes and improvements in the delivery of recreation opportunities for people with a disability. The Council works with the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission and the Department of Health and Fitness, Community Services and Natural Resources.
- In liaison with partner agencies, RCDNS maintains contact with agencies such as advocacy groups, service agencies, seniors centres, Recreation Association of Nova Scotia, and municipal recreation directors through newsletter exchange and personal contacts.

Barriers to Participation in Recreation

A 1990 survey and discussions with people with disabilities identified a number of issues, problems and concerns which create barriers to many recreation activities.

Following are eight specific problems which were considered in the development of Commission priorities to encourage participation.

1. A lack of knowledge and understanding about the needs of people having disabilities on the part of individuals, organizations and agencies providing recreation programs and services. This results in limiting the number of programs and services as possible recreation choices for people with disabilities.
2. Many recreation facilities are not accessible to physically disabled individuals. Simply, the ability to enter and function within the facility prohibits the participation of people with disabilities.
3. In some communities people with disabilities do not know where to look or who to contact in order to identify recreation opportunities. The roles and responsibilities of the many partners providing community recreation opportunities are unclear, and the confusion becomes a barrier to participation.
4. The transportation needs of many people having a disability become a barrier to participation. Often the person with the disability is unable to get to the location where an activity is taking place. Public transportation in many instances is inadequate or, as is often the case in rural areas of Nova Scotia, is non-existent.
5. For many individuals participation in recreation activity is dependent upon the availability of social supports such as a companion, assistance in preparation, transportation, or actual participation. Too often this support is not available.
6. There can be extra costs associated with providing opportunities for people with a disability. The cost must be born by the provider, the participant or a combination of the two. The additional costs involved in making a program accessible makes it a limiting factor for people with disabilities.
7. The lack of interest in participation in recreation programs by people with disabilities is often cited by program providers as a reason why limited attention is given to their needs. Lack of demand for programs becomes the rationale for why more opportunities are not provided. Program providers often find it difficult to contact people with a disability in their community.
8. Opportunities for people with disabilities to develop recreation interests is often dependent upon support and encouragement from more than one organization or agency. Often cooperation between or among agencies is required. The recognition that recreation is important to the individual may not exist without cooperation and communication between agencies. The recreation need is not always the priority for all the agencies which can provide support.

A Vision of Full Participation

The Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission has developed policies which aim to encourage people with disabilities to participate more extensively in sport and recreation activities. The policies also work to encourage those who provide recreation programs to make them more accessible in every way to clients with disabilities.

The Sport and Recreation Commission envisons that increased opportunities for sport and recreation for people with disabilities will positively influence many factors;

- Informed and confident people with disabilities will choose to participate in community activities on the same basis as anyone else. People with disabilities will make informed choices about both structured and non-structured leisure activities and will have access to the necessary supports in order to participate in regular community leisure and recreational programs and activities.
- Training for all recreation leaders, professional and volunteer will include awareness of why and how to eliminate barriers to participation and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities. Leaders will have confidence in their ability to respond to all people in the community.
- Sport and recreation organizations at the community level will have a willingness to reach out, include and support the participation of people with disabilities in their programs.
- Professionals in residential, vocational, educational, health and community service organizations will understand and support participation in recreational activities.
- Facilities providing sport and recreational opportunities will be barrier free.
- Municipalities and provincial sport and recreation organizations will have a clear definition of roles and responsibilities to ensure opportunities for all citizens.

Policies

In order to work toward realizing a Vision of Full Participation the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission has adopted a series of policies for implementation. Many of these policies are already being practised by Commission staff and are inherent in Commission programs.

Training For Service Providers

The Commission will promote and support programs and resources for volunteer and professional leaders addressing sport and recreation needs of people who have a disability.

Access To Facilities

The Recreation Facility Development Program of capital grants will require that new facility construction include a minimum of wheelchair access to all program and public areas of a new facility.

Sport and Recreation Commisson hosted activities shall take place in wheelchair accessible facilities. Upon request the SRC will provide additional supports, as required eg. looping, interpreters, transcription, attendant care.

Activities supported by the Sport and Recreation Commission will be encouraged to take place in wheelchair accessible facilities and to provide supports as required.

A QUIZ: Do you Encourage Participation by People with a Disability?

1. Are facilities physically accessible to people with a disability?	Yes ☐	No ☐
2. Are programs advertised in a dignified way that indicates they are available to people with a disability?	Yes ☐	No ☐
3. Are program instructors and leaders comfortable with participants with a disability?	Yes ☐	No ☐
4. Do program instructors and leaders have the skills and abilities to adapt or modify programs if necessary?	Yes ☐	No ☐
5. Are members of the community given the opportunity to help in planning programs and experiences?	Yes ☐	No ☐
6. Do you offer leisure counselling or activity sampling services?	Yes ☐	No ☐
7. Do you have a variety of programs requiring different skill levels for participation?	Yes ☐	No ☐
8. Do you offer individual, small and large group experiences?	Yes ☐	No ☐
9. Are you in regular contact with groups of people with a disability, associations and institutions in your community?	Yes ☐	No ☐
10. Do you encourage participants in a program to be a "buddy" or support person to a participant with a disability in the same program?	Yes ☐	No ☐
11. Do you have an understanding of, and a commitment to, the concept of integration?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Regional Representatives – Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission

Coordinator of Municipal and
Special Recreation Services
Victoria Court, 14 Court Street
Truro, Nova Scotia
B2N 3H7
893-5750
Fax: 893-6108

Regional Representative—Fundy
Victoria Court, 14 Court Street
Truro, Nova Scotia
B2N 3H7
893-9487
Fax: 893-6108

Regional Representative—Highland
257 Main Street
Antigonish, Nova Scotia
B2G 2C4
863-7380
Fax: 863-7477

Regional Representative—Central
45 Alderney Drive, Suite 813
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
B2Y 2N6
424-7622
Fax: 424-0600

Regional Representative—South Shore
P.O. Box 470
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
B4V 2X6
543-5000
Fax: 543-0676

Regional Representative—Cape Breton
Provincial Building
Prince Street
Sydney, Nova Scotia
B1P 5L1
563-2380
Fax: 563-0501

Regional Representative—Valley
P.O. Box 2140
Windsor, Nova Scotia
B0N 2T0
798-5794
Fax: 798-2676

Printed on paper that contains recycled fibre